typhoid fever, Sir James emphasised the benefit which would accrue to mankind from the use of these remedies.

Dr. Robert Saunby delivered an opening address at the Medical School of University College, Cardiff, on modern universities. The lecturer deplored the condition of university education in England so far as concerns medicine, and pointed to what was done by the State in Germany and France. This theme has been often dwelt upon, and not without effect. England is now waking up to the value of technical education, of creating places where men can pursue those studies which are to form their stock-in-trade for life.

The address at the Yorkshire College, Leeds, was given by Dr. Cullingworth upon the importance of personal character in the profession of medicine. The author referred to an interesting article by Sir James Paget on the result of an inquiry of what became of 1000 of his pupils fifteen years after their entry at St. Bartholomew's. This showed that 9 per cent. died within twelve years of their commencing practice, and forty-one, or about 4.5 per cent., during their pupilage, fifty-six failed entirely, the remainder were successful in all degrees varying from distinguished success to very limited success. This, on the whole, is not a bad average, and if it was possible to the medical student of 1870, more is possible and probable to the medical student of to-day.

From the above brief extracts it will be seen with what varied advice and dissertations the recruits of the medical profession have been introduced to their life study. The practitioner and advanced student, rendered more cynical, perhaps, by contact with his fellows, will be inclined, and perhaps not altogether wrongly, to recall the words of Mephistopheles to the would-be medical student in *Faust*, and abide by them :—

The trade of medicine's easiest of all.
'Tis but to study all things—everywhere
Nature and man—the great world and the small.
Then leave them at haphazard still to fare.

F. W. TUNNICLIFFE.

*SURGEON-MAJOR J. E. T. AITCHISON,
M.D., C.I.E., F.R.S.*

BOTANY has lost another of its devotees. Dr. Aitchison died at Kew on the 30th ult., at the age of sixty-three, after two or three years of bad health, consequent on a weak heart and other complications. He was a man of fine physique, and of a genial and happy disposition. The son of Major J. Aitchison, H.E.I.C.S., he was born in India in 1835. After successfully studying medicine and surgery at Edinburgh, he entered the Bengal medical service in 1858, and remained in it for thirty years. But it was as a botanical explorer and an investigator of the vegetable products of the various countries he visited that he was known in the scientific world. Enthusiastic, enterprising, and persevering in no ordinary degree, he succeeded in forming valuable botanical collections under difficulties that would have discouraged and prevented many men. Science is primarily indebted to him for collecting plants and their products and local information concerning them. In these investigations he was indefatigable; and he had a rich field for his labours in North-west India, Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Persia, and Russian Turkestan. He seems to have been led to botanical pursuits by the study of Indian drugs, as in tracing their origin he became familiar with vegetable organography, and acquired a love for plants which he retained to the last. Indeed, he settled at Kew in order to be able to continue his studies. His first contribution (1863) to botanical

literature was an enumeration of the plants of the Jhelum district of the Punjab, with notes on their products and distribution. It was in this paper that he published the only new species, I believe, that he ever described independently. For the many novelties he subsequently discovered he always called in professional aid, being too modest and too anxious for accuracy to attempt it alone.

Subsequently, in 1869, he published a catalogue of the plants of the Punjab and Sindh, which, however, was a good deal more than a catalogue. This was followed by a lengthy paper on the flora and vegetable products of Lahul, a "Handbook" on the trade products of Leh, and a number of smaller contributions to botanical literature. But his great harvest was made in Afghanistan and the surrounding countries. In the winter of 1878, he accompanied the troops under General (now Sir Frederick) Roberts into the Kuram Valley, and the following year was appointed botanist to the expedition. A collection of some 15,000 specimens of dried plants was made between Thal and Peiwarkotal, at elevations of 2500 to 15,000 feet. A further collection was made in 1880 in the same country; and in 1884 he was appointed naturalist to the Afghan Delimitation Commission. This was even more fruitful than the previous expeditions, yielding about 800 species, represented by 10,000 specimens. But Dr. Aitchison not only collected specimens; he also collected a large amount of local information concerning them. These immense collections were worked out at Kew, and the results published in the *Journal and Transactions* of the Linnean Society. The papers are prefaced by admirable descriptions of the vegetation and local conditions of the districts traversed. Apart from the plants collected by William Griffith during the first Afghan war (1839-40), Kew possessed very little from this interesting region; hence Aitchison greatly enriched the herbarium and museum. In addition to the papers mentioned, he wrote a number of articles on the medicinal and other vegetable products of commercial value. I had almost forgotten to mention that he also collected zoological specimens.

Personally Dr. Aitchison was of a most amiable and kind-hearted disposition, and this, combined with his fine presence, tact and medical knowledge, enabled him to mix with the natives with impunity, and obtain information that others could not. One of the first things he did on arriving at a place was to treat the sick, and his reputation preceded him, so that he was often approached and besought for aid. In 1883 he was created a Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire, and in the same year he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of London. Unfortunately the last year of his life was saddened by the loss of his wife, to whom he had been deeply attached.

He was occupied during the last two years in preparing a *Flora Indiae Deserta*, to include the plants of North-western India, Baluchistan, and Afghanistan, but his ailments prevented him from doing more than collect materials. It is not possible to find at once an equally qualified person to carry this idea into effect.

Though Aitchison was little in society during the last four or five years, there are many who will feel the loss of one who was such a cheerful companion and warm friend.

W. BOTTING HEMSLEY.

*CONFERENCE ON THE INTERNATIONAL
CATALOGUE OF SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE.*

AT the Royal Society on Monday evening, the President and Council held a reception to meet the delegates attending the international conference upon an international catalogue of scientific literature. The conference began on Monday, and practically all